The Builder.

No. CCCXXXI.

SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 1849.

GOTHIC exemplars multiply apace, and architects are ensured a *safe* road, though it be a low one, and are saved the trouble of thinking. Soon there will be nothing left to draw but the nail-holes, and this will probably be done, so that the mediæval disposition of these may be rigorously followed.

Regarded as evidences of the spirit in which the Gothic architects proceeded, and Illustrations of the principles which guided them,—as materials for us to work with, and suggestions by means of which we may proceed onwards, these illustrations are of great value; but, if used only for the purpose of servile imitation, as is too much the case, so far from advancing architecture amongst us, they will necessarily tend to stay its progress. Nothing great in art can be done without *progressive* efforts: retrogression, except so far as may be necessary to get out of a wrong road into the right one, is not the way forward.

We have several works of the class to which we have been alluding, now before us, some of them of great excellence and beauty. Amongst these we will name Dollman's "Examples of Antient Pulpits," just now published by Bell,* and Brandon's "Open Timber Roofs of the Middle Ages," published by Bogue.†

Up to this time there was no series of delineations of the ancient pulpits remaining in England. Mr. Dollman has given on thirty plates twenty-three specimens, mostly to the scale of one inch to a foot, with details a quarter the real size. Thirteen of these are stone pulpits, and ten of wood. The former are from St. Werburgh, Chester (*circa* 1270); St. Peter and Paul, Shrewsbury (1320); All Saints, North Cerney (1460); Holy Trinity, Nailsea (1500); St. Peter, Winchcombe (1520); St. John Baptist, Cirencester (1450); St. Mary, Totnes (1500); St. Mary, Frampton (1450); St. Benedict, Glastonbury (1500); St. Peter, Wolverhampton (1480); St. Andrew, Cheddar (1500); St. Andrew, Barwell (1480); and St. Saviour, Dartmouth (1530).

Those of wood are from St. Michael, Coventry (1400); St. Mary, Wenden (1440); St. Mary, Fotheringhay (1435); Holy Trinity, Cold Aston (1500); St. George, Brockworth (1520); Holy Trinity, Long Sutton (1530); All Saints, Sudbury (1500); All Saints, Hawstead (1540); St. Mary de Lode, Gloucester (1480); and St. Mary, North Petherton (1500). They are all very carefully and beautifully drawn in outline (Mr. Dollman's careful style of drawing is not unknown to the readers of THE BUILDER); and the examples from St. Andrew's, Cheddar; Holy Trinity, Long Sutton; and St. Saviour's, Dartmouth, are coloured and gilt in imitation of the originals.

It will be observed, that with the exception of the subjects from Chester and Shrewsbury, both *refectory pulpits*, with characteristic features of their own, the examples given are of the Perpendicular period. This, the author remarks, could not have been otherwise, "inasmuch as it was not till the fifteenth century that the pulpit appeared as a distinct feature of interior church arrangement." He says, in the course of his introductory remarks,—

"As soon as the rood-loft became a feature of importance in church arrangement, it supplied in a great measure the place of the ancient ambo; and from it the epistle and gospel were read by the dean and sub-deacon. Owing to the depth of the chancels, the view, as well as the hearing, must have been considerably impeded by the intervention of the rood-loft; and therefore it may fairly be assumed that from the necessity of the case originated the pulpit as best suited for its distinctive use, viz., that of preaching; and the part of the building that appeared most adapted for the purpose was the east end of the nave, immediately westward of the rood-screen. Possibly also the increased attention devoted to preaching in the fifteenth century may have been a reason. Since that period pulpits have been almost universally adopted, and the examples prior to the Reformation are far from uncommon, but previous to the year 1400 few, if any, are known to exist; one of about the date of 1340, at Fulbourn, in Cambridgeshire, which is figured in Part VII. of the "Instrumenta Ecclesiastica," being an exception. By a canon of 1603, every church was ordered to have a pulpit; a requirement to which the undue exaltation of preaching, which characterised the succeeding period, responded in the great number of pulpits erected in what is known as the Jacobean style. Of their kind these last are often very rich, though debased in style and more than questionable in detail. Among the most elaborate are the examples in the churches of St. Cuthbert at Wells, and St. Thomas at Newport, in the Isle of Wight. They are mostly of wood; but, of examples in stone, are to be found one at Dinder, near Wells, bearing date 1621, with the inscription, 'Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it,'—and another on the south side of the nave of Wells Cathedral (the entry to which has been made through Hugh Sugar's chantry), on which are inscribed the words, 'Preach thou the worde; be fervent in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.'"

Mr. Brandon's subject, the open timber roofs of the middle ages, affords wider scope than that last mentioned, and has received ample justice at his hands. Mr. Brandon, in conjunction with his late brother, has already done good service: his "Analysis of Gothic Architecture," and his "Parish Churches," are excellent works, and this, his last production, is worthy to stand on the same shelf with them.

In some places they would of themselves "set up" a Gothic architect, as times go. "Parish churches" would give the general arrangement; the "Analysis" supply doors, windows, mouldings, ornaments, sittings, and fittings; and the book now before us enables our artist to roof the whole in the most improved and effective manner. We sincerely hope, however, as the author himself urges, that they will be used to better purpose.

The book contains 43 quarto plates, and illustrates 35 roofs, 19 of which are supplied by Norfolk and 7 by Suffolk. Two of the roofs are coloured, and serve to illustrate different methods in which colour was introduced. Our own experience coincides with that of the author, in leading us to consider it almost a rule that

"Where the windows of a church present any remains of stained glass, other portions of the edifice have likewise been enriched with colouring. This style of embellishment, which dates from the remotest antiquity, appears to have been held in deservedly high estimation by the mediæval architects, nearly every portion of whose structures admitted of and profited by its application; and there is scarcely a church of their times that does not bear witness to this favourite style of decoration. We see it in the mosaic pavement, the frescoed walls, and the brilliant hues of the stained-glass windows; in the rood-loft and screen, rich in gold and gorgeous colouring, the lower panels adorned with paintings of the apostles and saints; in the sepulchral monuments, the pulpit, and lectern, and the font and cover, and finally in the roof itself, the crowning ornament of the whole edifice."

Our author classes the roofs in four main divisions, namely:—roofs with tie-beams; trussed rafter, or single-framed roofs; roofs framed with hammer beams and braces; and roofs constructed with collars and braces, or with the latter only. In speaking of the first division, he remarks:—

"In the churches of the Middle Ages, a perfectly horizontal tie-beam is of extremely rare occurrence; where a tie-beam is used, we almost invariably find it cambered, as are also the collar-beams; even the hammer-beams will be generally found, on close inspection, to incline upwards from the walls. The disagreeable effect of a straight tie-beam was often further counteracted, by having curved braces framed from its underside connecting it with the wall-pieces, thus forming an arched support for it, as at Outwell Church, Norfolk. In roofs of higher pitch the builders still endeavoured, with varied success as to effect, to retain the arched shape in conjunction with the tie-beams: a curious specimen exists at the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Pulham, Norfolk, where the beam literally divides the arch in two, and a similar instance is met with over the nave of Morton Church, Lincolnshire: the effect, however, is anything but agreeable or satisfactory."

Of the curved braces he says:—

"The curved braces in all the foregoing descriptions of roofs, besides binding the different timbers together, serve two other highly important purposes; in the first place, that of conveying the thrust or strain of the roof lower down on the walls, where of course they can offer a greater resistance to any lateral pressure; and, in the next place, serving as a great steadiment to the walls; this latter being by far the most important part of their services, for they are to be met with in roofs where no lateral thrust occurs, such as most tie-beam roofs, or the flat roofs which cover the late perpendicular clerestories of many of our churches: in neither of these cases is there any danger to be apprehended from an outward thrust of the roofs, and though the arched braces act as a great support to the massive beams, yet in conjunction with them they form a most effectual counterfort to the walls themselves—a very necessary provision when we contemplate the lofty clerestories, so perforated as to present almost the appearance of one long window opening, and call to mind that these are not supported on a solid foundation, but nicely poised on slender shafts placed at wide intervals apart."

This book is a very valuable contribution to the architectural library.

"A Book of Ornamental Glazing Quarries," by A. W. Franks, B.A., is another collection of examples, just now published by J. H. Parker.* This is a handsome octavo volume, in red, nicely got up, and ranging with Mr. Winston's excellent "Hints on Glass Painting." Whether the subject justifies the cost and pains seems to us doubtful. By quarries are meant the lozenge-shaped panes with which windows in old buildings are generally glazed. "The word is apparently derived from the French *carre*, or *carreau*, meaning a four-sided figure; or perhaps it is a corruption of the older word *quarrel*,† which seems to come from *quadrellum*, a small square."

* "Examples of Antient Pulpits existing in England, selected and drawn from sketches and measurements taken on the spot, with descriptive letter-press. By Francis T. Dollman, architect. London: G. Bell, Fleet-street, and by the author, 27, Mornington-place, Hampstead-road.

† "The open timber roofs of the middle ages. Illustrated by perspective and working drawings of some of the best varieties of church roofs, with descriptive letter-press." By R. and J. A. Brandon, architects. London: D. Bogue.

* "A Book of Ornamental Glazing Quarries, collected and arranged from Ancient Examples." By Augustus Wollaston Franks, B.A. London and Oxford. J. H. Parker, 1849.

† This word appears in the account of Little Sanham Hall (*vide* "Glossary of Architecture,"); and in the account rolls of the reign of Edward III. ("Hints on Glass Painting," vol. i., p. 337). In the latter case it may possibly be in

To learn about OCR and PDF Compression visit our website